

Chapter 6

Lemnos and Gallipoli:

Towards redressing a marginalised history

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Background

Despite the Greek island of Lemnos being just 100 kilometres from the Gallipoli peninsula and having played a crucial role in the eight month Dardanelles campaign, the island is virtually unknown to most Australians. While there is much written about Gallipoli, Lemnos is not usually included in this discourse. The other neighbouring islands off the Gallipoli peninsula that played a part in the campaign, Imbros and Tenedos, also receive little consideration. Despite the continued growth in the popularity of pilgrimages to Anzac, Lemnos remains a neglected corner of the physical site and of the historical accounts of Gallipoli. It has been marginalised over time and is not conceptualised as part of the Gallipoli campaign. Lemnos is often regarded as being something of an addition; a sideshow to the main event, when in fact it was vital to the military encounter.

Much of what has been recorded and written about Lemnos, as discussed below, deals with the establishment and operation of hospitals on the island for the wounded from Gallipoli. The medical facilities on the island are a relatively well-known element of the Gallipoli narrative. Less known are the recuperative, recreational, entertainment and other activities that took place on the island. Also overlooked by much of the existing scholarship is the fact that activities on Lemnos both preceded and succeeded the landings and evacuation of the peninsula. Mudros Harbour was the point at which the various Allied forces began to assemble some months prior to the 25 April landings and Lemnos was also the place where many of those evacuated from Gallipoli were taken. Furthermore, according to various writers including Peter Cochrane and Peter Stanley, Research Professor of History at the University of NSW, Canberra,

another Gallipoli legend began on Lemnos: John Simpson Kirkpatrick's donkey (Murphy) was acquired on the island¹ Lemnos can therefore claim to have a significant place in the foundational events of the Anzac mythology. It was also the location of the ending of the war with the Ottoman Empire in October 1918, aboard the *HMS Agamemnon* in Mudros Harbour. Yet, this importance is not known or understood by much of the Australian population. While the military and civilian links between Australia and Greece, particularly Crete, during World War II are recognised and publically highlighted, for example, the 70th Anniversary Commemorative celebrations of the Battle of Crete in May 2011, the ties between the two countries during World War I are not. My research, which is in its early stages, aims to help rectify this gap.

Many questions therefore arise about the Allied presence on Lemnos, including what official knowledge existed about the island and its people before the occupation took place. How was the Allied presence on Lemnos viewed, officially and unofficially, by the Greek government of the day? Also requiring further investigation is what sort of relationships developed between the locals and the foreigners, notably the Australians. Did their presence disrupt or interfere with Lemnian society? What has been passed on to the local inhabitants of Lemnos about the Allied, and particularly Australian, presence? Was there any opposition to the Allied presence on the island? Furthermore, what insights in to their own culture do the attitudes and behaviours of Australians engaging with Lemnians provide? There is also no serious consideration given to the social, political, economic and perfunctory effects the arrival of 20th century technologies had on the people and structures of this remote Greek island that still functioned as a 19th century rural subsistence community. This chapter aims to help with the process of re-animating the vital heritage of Lemnos by exploring areas of neglect in the existing literature and suggesting new research so as to help re-dress the marginalisation of the island in the history of Gallipoli and World War I.

The literature

The First World War is one of the most significant events in the national life of Australia, "with its striking legacies of increased national awareness, pride and self-confidence, accelerated urbanisation and industrialisation, the continuance of imperial ties..."² Australia's first military engagement of the war at Gallipoli has provided the nation with a day of remembrance and reflection. Almost every Australian has some knowledge of the Gallipoli campaign. The Australian War Memorial notes that Anzac Day is "probably Australia's most important national occasion" and that:

Australian and New Zealand actions during the [Gallipoli] campaign bequeathed an intangible but powerful legacy. The creation of what became known as the 'Anzac legend' became an important part of the national identity of both nations. This shaped the ways they viewed both their past and future.³

Hence, for nearly 100 years, the Gallipoli campaign and the First World War in general have had considerable historical and sociological interest for Australia. The work of Australia's official historian of the First World War, Charles Bean, cannot be ignored when considering what has been said about the Gallipoli campaign. In his first two volumes of the *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, he provides the most comprehensive chronicling of the campaign. But when it comes to Lemnos, even Bean limits his discussion to military matters and physical landscape. His chapter, 'The Dardanelles Expedition', makes considerable reference to Lemnos. Bean discusses the British fleet's need of a suitable harbour, and the various alternative islands, but concludes that "Lemnos possesse[d] the finest haven of all in Mudros Bay".⁴ The subsequent preparations for the landing of Allied forces and the sending of an Australian brigade to the island are also discussed.

Bill Gammage's *The Broken Years*, published in 1974 and re-printed many times, describes the experience of Australian soldiers of the time based on their letters and diaries. This social history of the war and not just the Gallipoli campaign does not, however, provide insight in to Greek-Australian relations on Lemnos. While the book "remains one of the finest books about Australians at war",⁵ it highlights a gap in the historical record that the further research hopes to address. Gammage was later employed as the military advisor on Peter Weir's 1981 film *Gallipoli* and he also worked on the screen play of the film: a film from which many Australians gained their strongest impressions about the Gallipoli campaign. There is no reference to Lemnos in this popular visual account.

Not surprisingly, there is much written about Gallipoli: specific elements of the campaign; notable individuals and events; its place in the broader context of the Great War, and its effects on the nation. Dennis Winter's *25 April 1915: the inevitable tragedy*, published in 1994, for example, focuses principally on the first day of fighting in the area that became known as Anzac Cove. Winter discusses the training of the troops in Egypt and their final days on Lemnos, before turning his attention to the wayward landing further south than planned and then the grief felt by Australians as news of the disaster reached home.

As well as the many articles and papers examining specific aspects of Gallipoli, there are also texts that explore particular facets of the campaign.⁶ Certainly, medical and military accounts and archival sources can be found referring to

conditions, preparations, manoeuvres and casualties. Medical histories such as Michael Tyquin's 1993 book, *Gallipoli: the medical war*, deals with the nature and treatment of wounds and disease, which includes discussion of the hospitals on Lemnos, located around Mudros harbour. Some reference to the islanders is made, but not in any great depth or with any particular understanding of the local inhabitants. Tyquin considers the first visits to the island by commanding officers such as Sir Ian Hamilton, and the poor medical arrangements that were made at Lemnos. The transportation of the wounded, the unhygienic conditions of the hospitals, water shortages, sickness and disease, lack of dental care, the different provisions supplied to the various Allied hospitals and relations between the different national medical services are all discussed in his book.

Numerous photos in Australia and Greece, personal accounts such as soldiers' and nurses' diaries, official reports, correspondence and dispatches by various governments, have assisted in uncovering various aspects of the nature and effects of Allied and Greek interaction. Australian newspapers from 1915–1916 also published extracts from soldiers' letters that provide descriptions of interest requiring further interrogation. The comments in the many extant nurses' diaries also provide insight in to the war experience. As Katrina Hedditch notes in her 2011 account of the experiences of Australian nurses in the Dardanelles: "Their stories are a priceless and detailed first-hand record of the Gallipoli's campaign's medical history ...".⁷

Works such as *More than Bombs and Bandages – Australian Army nurses at work in World War One* by Kirsty Harris (2011) and Jan Bassett's earlier study *Guns and brooches: Australian Army nursing from the Boer War to the Gulf War* (1992), provide insight into the female war experience.⁸ Harris, for instance, draws on personal diaries, interviews, service records, hospital diaries and autobiographies, to emphasise the important work of nurses throughout the Great War. Bassett gives consideration to relationships that developed between nurse and soldier, but not much about nurse and Lemnian. Janet Butler (2003) notes that the diaries are also somewhat silent about the physical hardships nurses had to endure.⁹ Whereas the diaries have been examined as historical sources and from medical, feminist and self-reflective perspectives, the interrogating of the accounts for references to the island; its physical and cultural features, and the experiences of its people is limited.

The Australian War Memorial has extensive medical archives. All units were required to keep diaries to record their daily activities.¹⁰ These war diaries recorded the date of each entry, the unit's location, a summary of events and any remarks or references to appendices.¹¹ Combined with the work of Colonel A.G. Butler in his *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services in*

the War of 1914–1918, this data principally throws new light on the clinical, not human, relationships between the Allies and the locals.

Some writers, including Jonathon King in the *Gallipoli Diaries* (2003) and Patsy Adam-Smith's *The ANZACS* (1978), have used soldier diaries to tell the Gallipoli story. Their accounts remain fundamentally a story about the day-to-day experiences of Australian soldiers, particularly the deprivations endured, on the peninsula. Adam-Smith also elucidates directly from former soldiers about why they went to war, but soldier interactions on Lemnos were not part of any of this research.

Literature about the 1915 campaign continues to be published. Titles including Jonathan King's book *Gallipoli: Our Last Man Standing* (2004) and Harvey Broadbent's *Gallipoli: The Fatal Shore* (2009) are examples. Ashley Ekins' edited volume *Gallipoli: A Ridge Too Far* (2013) makes some reference to Lemnos. However, Les Carlyon's popular 2001 publication, *Gallipoli*, includes only two references to Lemnos/Mudros in its 569 pages. Garrie Hutchinson's *An Australian Odyssey from Giza to Gallipoli* (1997) makes no reference to Lemnos, nor does his *Gallipoli: The Pilgrimage Guide* (2007). Bruce Scates' *Return to Gallipoli* (2006) also neglects to mention Lemnos or Mudros. More recently, Peter Stanley's *Simpson's Donkey* (2011) opens on Lemnos and his latest publication *Lost Boys of Anzac* (2014) includes a section about the last six weeks of its protagonists' lives on Lemnos before the invasion of Gallipoli.¹²

The role of the navy in the Dardanelles is another aspect of the campaign that receives its own attention. However, these and other works do not give much consideration, if any, to the inhabitants of the island of Lemnos from where the campaign was launched. In fact, the Gallipoli campaign has, over time, narrowed to exclude any location other than the peninsula, even though sites, such as Lemnos, were integral to the expedition. To understand the degree and nature of interaction between Australians and the local population, it is important to look beyond existing accounts and those pieces that are imperialistic, nationalistic and heroic, which Robin Gerster labelled "big-noting".¹³

Greek historiography focuses on the political rivalries and implications of the quarrel between Royalists and Venizelosists at this juncture, for the remainder of the war, and much of the interwar period. Political turmoil and fracture would in fact dominate Greece until 1974 and the nation's historiography reflects these realities.¹⁴ Much Greek historiography has therefore been political in nature and only in the last quarter of the 20th century were the shackles of nationalism and Hellenic continuity from classical times broken. According to writers such as Antonis Liakos, Modern Greek history did not truly emerge as something distinct from Byzantine history until 1937 when the University of

Athens established its first chair in Modern History.¹⁵ Such historiographical trends affected what was (and was not) written about the country's World War I experience.

Balkan Wars expert Dr Helen Gardikas-Katsiadakis notes how Lemnos and neighbouring islands reverted to Greece in 1912 after centuries of Ottoman rule,¹⁶ but the specific detail of the arrangements that followed which resulted in these islands being controlled by the British are not well understood. (The island remained an Allied base for operations in the Mediterranean until the end of the war, playing an important role in subsequent naval and air campaigns.) While local attitudes to the new "occupiers" appear to have been positive, the degree of suspicion or animosity towards the British or collaboration with the Turks has not been investigated. With the island's sovereignty somewhat unclear, the relations between local and visitor also needs considering.

Greece would eventually enter the war in July 1917, with the King under such intense Allied pressure that he departed the country. Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos returned to Athens assuming control of the government. The Greek army, however, would not be ready for any serious action until early 1918. Thus the role of Lemnos in the earlier events on Gallipoli has not been examined from the Greek perspective. Indeed, there is even less Greek historiography about the island during the World War I period than English language histories. Thus, the proposed research hopes to uncover the other side of the Lemnos story as well as unearth more information about Anzac circumstances and activities on the island. Various Greek scholars, including Katsiadakis, and government officials are keen to see what new insights into the Australia-Hellenic Republic's relations such research would uncover.

Lemnian sources that help to inform about attitudes and experiences from the time also need to be scrutinised. For example, an oral history collection undertaken several years ago by Theodoros Belitsos, an expert on pre-1945 Lemnos, is likely to include relevant testimony from individuals who experienced the war.¹⁷ A Greek-Australian publication collated by Penelope Panagiotopoulou in 2005, *The Lemnians of Sydney*, is a collection of oral histories from migrants who arrived in Australia between 1936 and 1973. The book with its 69 mini-biographies is another instance of a source that can provide further insight and informants who can be quizzed about the events of 1915. Additionally, there are in Greece and Australia elderly persons who have tales to tell of the experiences their parents and grandparents endured during the Great War.

The narrative

Before landing at Gallipoli, and then again during the eight month campaign, Lemnos played an important role in the unfolding catastrophe.¹⁸ The legendary

home of the Greek god Hephaestus, a trading outpost for the Minoan Greeks in ancient times and the homeland of one of the first Greek migrants to Australia,¹⁹ Lemnos was the base from where the Entente/Allied forces launched the Gallipoli campaign. Liberated from Ottoman rule during the first Balkan War of 1912, the island was about to become the base for the fight against the Ottoman Empire. In February 1915, the Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos granted the British access to the island with its large natural harbour at Mudros.²⁰ Rear Admiral Wester Wemyss was then appointed Governor of Lemnos and commanded the base.²¹ Soon after, Anglo-French forces massed a large armada and infantry forces. It was here that the Australians practised beach landings in preparation for the assault on Gallipoli.

Accordingly, the Australians departed by ship from Egypt for the Gallipoli peninsula, after several months of training near Cairo. They then landed at what became known as Anzac Cove on 25 April 1915 and established a tenuous foothold on the steep slopes above the beach. During the early days of the campaign, the Allies attempted to break through Turkish lines, while the Turks tried to drive the Allied troops off the peninsula. Efforts on both sides ended in failure and the ensuing stalemate continued for the remainder of 1915. The most successful operation of the campaign was the evacuation of troops on 19 and 20 December, even though many of the hospital staff and hospital ships remained at Mudros until January 1916. This brief and typical re-telling of the campaign, in this instance provided by the Australian War Memorial, neglects the important role played by Lemnos and its people.²²

In 1915, Lemnos was undeveloped, with few roads, major buildings and limited infrastructure. Its villagers led what can only be described as a simple life, scratching a living from the land and trading their surpluses of food and produce with outsiders. However, during their eight months on Lemnos, the Allied soldiers, nurses and engineers transformed the island. Roads and piers were built, bridges repaired, water sources improved and the villagers found a new source of income in supplying the thousands of new visitors to the island. The locals would benefit from access to new medical services built on the island for the wounded from Gallipoli. As they toured across the island enjoying some free time, the soldiers and nurses inter-acted socially with their Lemnian neighbours. This meeting of peoples and cultures is communicated in some of their writings and photographs.

By the time Captain (later Lieutenant Colonel) Frederick E Forrest of the 3rd Field Artillery Brigade landed at Lemnos on 10 April 1915, there were already some 3,200 Australians on the island.²³ The 3rd Australian Infantry Brigade, the 1st Field Company of Engineers, the 3rd Field Ambulance and the brigade transport, along with parts of the Australian 1st Field Bakery and the 1st

Australian Casualty Clearing Station landed from Egypt a month before and were the first Australian military personnel to set foot on Greek soil.

Captain Forrest described the island as “pretty”. “Greek farms studded the foreshore and hills. [Mudros was] an ideal harbour, well protected [and] full of ships, transports, warships and hospital ships. Warships of all nations ...”.²⁴ According to Forrest, Lemnos had been leased from Greece “for the large sum of one pound per annum”. His diary entry for 16 April notes that the Greek inhabitants were “all very friendly disposed to us”.²⁵

Soon after, Lance Corporal Archibald Barwick made his own observations about Lemnos:

Lemnos is a one-horsed place. ... The people are practically all Greek and they are 100 years behind the times. They do all their own spinning from the raw wool and make their own clothes from it. There are some very pretty girls; they are snow white and very shy. ... The Greek children would stand with their mouth wide open and gaze at the gramophone while it was playing as if it were some marvellous thing.²⁶

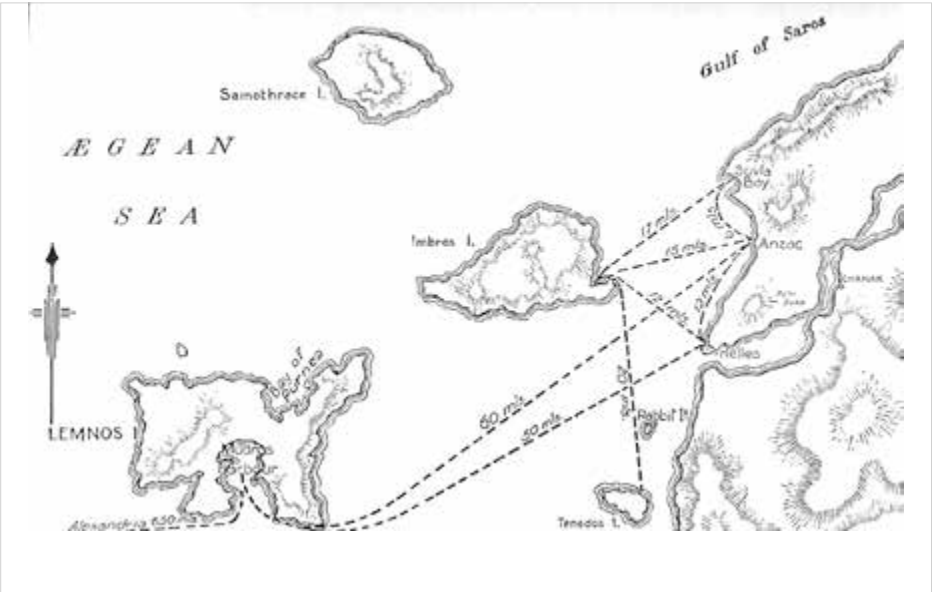
On his arrival at Mudros harbour in early April, soldier Herbert V Reynolds wrote in his diary:

This harbour is a fairly pretty looking place, half a dozen small villages are to be seen upon the surrounding hills the slopes of which appear to be under cultivation. Numerous windmills after the style of old Dutch mills are to be seen. At about 8am we moved alongside the transport A8 *Lake Michigan*, anchored and made fast to her. We practiced descending rope ladders into lifeboats over the sides of the ship. Numbers of Greek traders selling nuts, figs, chocolate etc. came out in small boats alongside the ship and did a pretty good trade. They use the same method of trading as the natives at Colombo.²⁷

Meanwhile, the Australian infantry began its strenuous training program on the shores of the harbour carrying heavy backpacks while scurrying up into the nearby hills. Bean wrote that:

The men were to be practised at communicating information in battle, and at carrying a very full load. There were constant landing and rushes up the foothills.²⁸

Captain Forrest recorded that even horses were sent ashore for exercise. He undertook landing practice on 19 April and by then many more “troopers” had entered the Bay. These soldiers included British, French, Senegalese and Indian personnel.



MAP 1: Map of the east Mediterranean showing Lemnos and Gallipoli

MAP 2: Map showing Lemnos in relation to the Gallipoli peninsula

IMAGE SOURCE: Charles E W Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Vol 2, Melbourne, Australian War Memorial, 1924.



LEFT: Greek priest and some of his congregation, Lemnos 1915. (Source: Fryer Library, University of Queensland Library, http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/eserv/UQ:706/web_F831_21_21012u.jpg, accessed 26 March 2010.)



CENTRE: Scene from a Greek village on Lemnos, 1915. (Source: A.W. Savage, State Library of NSW-PXE 698.)



BELOW: Above: Arrival of the first detachment of Australian nurses being led by a piper. (Source: A W Savage, photo album, PXE 698, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.)



ABOVE: An Australian soldier's funeral, with officers and nurses from the 3rd AGH in escort. (Source: AW Savage, photo album, PXE 698, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.)



ABOVE: Anzac War Memorial at quayside, Mudros Harbour, 2011. LEFT & BELOW: Allied war cemeteries, Portianos and East Mudros on Lemnos, 2011. (Photos courtesy, John Yiannakis.)



As the campaign intensified, Lemnos began to play an even more significant role in the treatment of the ill and seriously wounded. Convalescence emerged as major problem compounded by the lack of preparatory engineering development at Lemnos. For instance, it had taken sometime for the island's sanitation to become anything more than rudimentary. The lack of pre-planning, building and engineering material shortages and a scarcity of suitable boats to transport materials contributed to the problem. With the increase in casualties from offensives in August and the abundance of sick that followed in late August, September and October it nevertheless became necessary to develop Lemnos as an intermediate military base. Therefore, the No 1 Australian Stationary Hospital, located at east Mudros, was joined by an expanded No 2 Australian Stationary Hospital (from 624 beds to 1,200 beds) and No 3 Australian General Hospital in August 1915, both situated at West Mudros.³¹ An Australian rest camp or convalescent depot had already been established at Sarpi across from the hospitals on West Mudros.

Approximately 130 Australian nurses served at the hospitals on the island and many more on the hospital ships.³² One of those who arrived as part of the 3rd Australian General Hospital staff was Sister Rachel Pratt. She was immediately taken aback by the conditions she found at Lemnos. Not only was the island barren, but also the basics were still to be established. There were no marquees for the wounded, or accommodation for the staff and no hospital equipment. "Things were therefore in rather a state of chaos when the wounded began to arrive".³³ Equipment turned up three weeks later and the situation seemed "less hopeless", though the number of wounded and sick remained pressing. "Dysentery was the scourge of the island", she wrote. These cases placed an extra burden on the hospitals and the nurses.

There was little shade from the fierce summer sun for the nurses, and there were not enough mosquito nets. The flies were particularly bad for all on Lemnos, with the problem compounded by poor sanitation arrangements. The shortage of water on the island, to which many soldiers and nurses referred in letters and diaries, did not help the situation. Sister Nellie A Pike described the situation thus:

Our water came from the warships until a condenser was built on the island to convert salt water into fresh. No bread was available, only tough army biscuit. Later our rations improved, but by the grace of the Red Cross, not through official army issue.³⁴

The matron of No 3 Australian General Hospital, Grace Wilson, added that on 9 August she "found 150 patients lying on the ground. No equipment whatever. Did best we could. Have tents ourselves, but no beds or mattresses. Had no water to drink or wash".³⁵

Soldiers recovering from an injury or on respite from the battlefield found many aspects of Lemnos to their liking. One wrote:

In the little villages good meals can be obtained – especially those delicious Continental omelettes ... The quaint old windmills on the hill, and the church in the village square where the gossips gathered together, were reminiscent of the Old World life made familiar to us in our youth by means of books and pictures.³⁶

“Oranges, tangerines and figs are plentiful and cheap”, penned one soldier.³⁷ However, another explained, what many of them enjoyed most of all were the thermal springs on the island:

But the excursion most in favour with the Australian was to the hot springs, on the slope of Mt Therma. Round these had been built a rest house ... to the man who had not had a decent wash for nearly four months, the opportunity was revelled in.³⁸

Another soldier wrote:

So out to Thermos hurried the men, to whom a hot bath was a boon beyond price. The procedure was to strip off and with a little dipper pour water over oneself. Thermos became the most popular resort on the island.³⁹

It is evident, therefore, that Lemnos was crucial to the conduct of the Gallipoli campaign from beginning to end, strategically, logistically, medically and recuperatively, yet the relationships and intricacies of the experiences Australians and Lemnian had have not been fully researched. Little exists about the true nature of the human and diplomatic relationships that developed between the Lemnians (Greece) and the Anzacs (Australia). Thus, more comprehensive interrogating of sources is required so as to better establish Lemnos' place in the story of Anzac.

The importance of Lemnos as a medical centre became even more apparent during the latter half of the Gallipoli campaign. Between 7 August and 11 November 96,943 sick and wounded arrived at Mudros from the beaches.⁴⁰ With accommodation stretched large numbers of cases had to be evacuated to England and Egypt. There was a repetition of the defects of treatment of the sick and wounded of the first stage of the campaign.⁴¹ An Adelaide newspaper, *The Register*, reported how it was impossible to convey what was happening at “that Lemnos hospital, with its two overworked orderlies and its equally overworked doctor; its flies, sand, leait [wild grass, weeds] and rough food”.⁴² Patients with all sorts of diseases had been nursed: smallpox, fevers, pleurisy, pneumonia, dysentery, mastoids, and bullet and shrapnel wounds “galore”.

Just like the soldiers, many nurses gradually found aspects of the island to their liking. The simple charm of Mudros and its environs in particular won some of them over. "The harbour was delightful, the waters of the Aegean scarcely showing a ripple", said one.⁴³ Sister Adelaide M Kellett reflected:

Beautiful as the sunsets were in Egypt, they were nothing compared to those at Lemnos. As you watched, the whole sky and surrounding country was veiled in a deep rose colour ... The afterglow was equally as beautiful, which had again changed to a bright sapphire blue.⁴⁴

Lemnos was arguably the essential obverse of Gallipoli, each related to the other through links of transport (ferries, warships, supply ships, hospital ships), accessibility, safety (if mostly temporary), female companionship (perhaps), and every day – as opposed to the extremities of war – interaction and discourse in general. In relation to his experience of Lemnos with elements of the 4th Infantry Brigade, General John Monash commented on: "the sudden transference from an environment of strife and clamour and wreckage of war, to this peaceful island with its rolling landscapes".⁴⁵

The Governor of Western Australia, Sir William Campion, expressed a similar sentiment in July 1926, when he opened a veteran's hospice for the "mentally incapacitated" in the Perth suburb of Shenton Park, called *Lemnos Home*. He said that "no more suitable name than Lemnos could have been selected for the home. The soldiers who fought at Gallipoli would remember Lemnos as a peaceful island and an ideal place for resting".⁴⁶ Like the island the hospital was to be a "haven of rest". These soldiers' experiences alone make the island important and worthy of greater consideration.

Pilgrimages to Lemnos

As noted, the island of Lemnos and its importance to the Gallipoli campaign is virtually unknown to most Australians. It certainly does not lure large numbers of visitors. Yet, every year tens of thousands of Australians make their way to Gallipoli, the Western Front in France and other sites of the Great War. Some go in search of family memory, seeking the grave of a soldier lost a lifetime ago. For others, an Anzac pilgrimage has become a rite of passage, a statement of what it means to be Australian. This is particularly the case for the many who visit the Gallipoli peninsula. However, the island of Lemnos does not feature in any of these pilgrimages. While attending the Anzac Day dawn service is the pinnacle pilgrimage experience for many, there are now numerous tours on offer, virtually all year round, for the visitor to Gallipoli.⁴⁷ The 'Anzac Walk', for example, which is designed for the Australian visitor who has little time, but can devote one day to explore the main area held by the Anzacs on Gallipoli from

25 April to 20 December 1915.⁴⁸ There are day tours such as The ‘Gallipoli Tour’, featuring 22 historical sites on the Gallipoli peninsula and the Dardanelles. Currently, the island of Lemnos does not feature in any of these undertakings.

The space that is visualised as ‘Gallipoli’ does not include neighbouring Lemnos even though, as discussed, the campaign began and, for many soldiers, ended there. Thus, Lemnos is an under-represented component of not just the Gallipoli campaign, but of Gallipoli tourism.

Furthermore, while the spatial aspects of Gallipoli itself have been extensively mythologised – and intensively, indeed microscopically, studied and analysed – little attention has been given to the geography and configuration of Lemnos. While Gallipoli was the site of conflict, its landscape almost immediately sacralised, the essential role of Lemnos was effectively a secular counter-world of care, respite, entertainment, renewal and normality. As well as being physically removed from the fighting, troops were able to interact with civilians, females (nurses and Lemnians), sleep, eat, be clean and generally participate in the discourses and practices associated with peace rather than war. These activities occurred within a place that, unlike the effectively displaced Gallipoli (death, fear, separation from normality, male only, etc) provided buildings, roads, fields, and a range of such leisure pursuits as fishing, much like those of home and peace. As mentioned, soldier letters and diaries are enthusiastic about these aspects of Lemnos, even if sometimes expressing reservations about the treeless terrain (similar to Gallipoli), the dress of the inhabitants and the basic nature of the local way of life.

Contemporary developments

Since 2001, commemorative services have been held on Lemnos in memory of all of those died in the Gallipoli campaign. A service takes place at the larger of the two war cemeteries on the island, near the port town of Mudros, and at the port itself, where a war memorial has been erected. In 2002 the memorial at Mudros Harbour was unveiled as a permanent reminder of the role Lemnos played in the Gallipoli campaign. The Hellenic Sub-Branch of the RSL (Victoria) and the Greek Medical and Legal Association, which commissioned the project, arranged with local Greek authorities for the funding and construction of the 1.5 square metre memorial and for an annual ceremony to be held on Anzac Day at Mudros.⁴⁹ The commemorative memorial with its plaque, labelled in Greek and English, ‘Australia and Lemnos 1915–1916’, is on local council land near the harbour’s edge. An image of a nurse and the official Australian insignia can also be found on the Australian manufactured plaque.

The Lemnos Municipal Council and the Lemnian Association of Victoria hoped that the memorial would become part of the pilgrimage for Australians who want to pay homage to the deeds of those who risked their lives at Gallipoli. This hasn't happened to date, but locals remain hopeful. The Mayor of Mudros (Chrisostomos Maitharis) in 2011, expressed the view that he found it strange that so many people visited Gallipoli, the site of much suffering and death, and did not visit the place, the counter-world, where the Anzacs were hosted. The Deputy Mayor (Dimitri Boulotis) said he hoped that significant celebrations would take place in 2015, but this would require considerable planning between local and Australian authorities.⁵⁰

There is potential to develop Lemnos, and Mudros in particular, as another destination for those visiting sites related to the Gallipoli campaign; though, given Greek-Turkish diplomatic relations, not an easy prospect. This possibility is further complicated by the lack of transportation between Lemnos and the peninsula. To reach Gallipoli it is still necessary to travel via Istanbul.

The inclusion of Lemnos on the Anzac pilgrimage trail could, however, help reduce the burden of numbers and associated problems impacting on Gallipoli. There is a growing concern, as expressed by Harvey Broadbent, that the some of the sites on the peninsula are being degraded.⁵¹ As well as Australians and New Zealanders, Turkish visitors also attend the expanded Anzac Day ceremonies at Gallipoli each year and arrive regularly throughout the rest of the year.⁵²

If the geographic and conceptual space of what and where Gallipoli is can be expanded in the minds of Australians (and Turks), not only would the local Lemnian economy benefit, but also the pressure on the Gallipoli sites may be reduced. Historian Bill Gammage has asked the question, "Should Anzac Day be allowed to destroy Anzac?" while Broadbent suggests that the Anzac Day services should be moved away immediately to a nearby but more manageable area.⁵³ Regulating the battlefield is exercising the minds of Australian officials and Turkish authorities, balancing local and national interests. Transport and security arrangements have had a profound impact on the integrity of the battlefield landscape and their goal is to protect the battlegrounds from future degradation and damage.⁵⁴

By expanding the 'space' that Gallipoli occupies in people's minds through further research, the under-representation of Lemnos in both Gallipoli's history and tourism industry could be reduced.

In May 2011, the author visited the island of Lemnos as part of preliminary fieldwork. The scoping exercise was undertaken to ascertain what physical remnants endure from the Anzac presence as well as what remains in the psyche and folklore of the islanders. In all instances, the Australian presence

is evident and the Australians are remembered. The former hospital sites were located, helping to provide a better understanding of the terrain and hardships that would have been endured on Lemnos a century ago. The local municipality holds photos of interest from the time and though many relate to the French presence, images of Australians do exist.

The archives of the Hellenic Republic's Foreign Office in Athens were also visited with a range of source material accessed to gauge the nature and amount of relevant documentation available. A cursory investigation revealed a range of pertinent files from 1915 and 1916 dealing, for example, with "Greece and the Entente", "Anti-British Sentiments" and documents about Australia and England.⁵⁵ Also of interest was correspondence from Mudros to Athens about the Turkish campaign, and official British government notices with specific detail regarding compensation by them to the owners of land occupied or damaged at Mudros and surrounding villages during 1915 by British Military Authorities.

Contact too was made with scholars at the Academy of Athens, in both the contemporary history and archaeology departments, for further insight into understandings about the Australian presence and evidence. For example, while digging for evidence of the Minoan presence on the island, archaeologist Dr Chris Boulotis found bottles, jugs and a sheet of galvanised iron from 1915.

The modern day visitor to Lemnos can find plenty of evidence of the Allied presence of 1915: for example, graves at the two war cemeteries. Of the 1,235 Allied soldiers buried at either the Mudros or Portianos cemetery, there can be found 148 Australians and 76 New Zealanders. The main military cemetery on Lemnos is at east Mudros, about one kilometre from the town and next to the civilian graveyard. The cemetery was begun in April 1915 and contains 885 Commonwealth graves, including 98 Australians, plus 32 burials of other nationalities, mainly Russians.⁵⁶

The other military cemetery is near the village of Portianos and it too is located next to the local burial site. This cemetery commenced in August 1915 and was used until August 1920. Of the 347 Commonwealth personnel buried here, 50 are Australian.⁵⁷

Less well-known examples of the Allied presence on Lemnos are the British SRD rum jars used by locals as water containers and vases or the archaeological finds. Additionally, there are large eucalyptus trees on the island and two streets in Mudros named Anzac. Remnants of the wooden pier facilities used by the different Allied forces, including Australians, are also visible in the bay at Mudros.

This chapter seeks to raise awareness of the need for further research into the importance of Lemnos to the Gallipoli campaign and of the island's contribution to the Anzac legend. Existing literature has tended to understate the significance of Lemnos to the entire Dardanelles venture. While acknowledging that Lemnos is mentioned in various campaign accounts, the intended research aims for deeper investigation so as to better explain the nature of spatial and cultural relationships between the islanders and the Australians. A better understanding of the complexities of interactions at various levels, not only in terms of the physical aspects of the Gallipoli experience, but also in relation to Lemnian heritage, commemoration and migration, and the Anzac tradition is being advocated. Research, as proposed in this chapter, would help overcome the marginalisation of Lemnos in the history and mythology of Gallipoli.

Notes

- ¹ Peter Cochrane, *Simpson and the Donkey: the Making of a Legend*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), 1992.
- ² J T Laird, *Other Banners*, (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1971), 1.
- ³ "The Anzac Day Tradition," Australian War Memorial website, http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac/anzac_tradition.asp, accessed 29 April, 2013.
- ⁴ Charles E W Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918, Vol 1, The Story of ANZAC*, (Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1939), 185.
- ⁵ Ian Hodges, "Gallipoli: The Sources", <http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/gallipoli.asp>, accessed 8 December 2009.
- ⁶ Including work by Les Carlyon, Ken Inglis, Richard Nile, Bruce Scates, Graham Seal, Peter Stanley and Graham Wilson.
- ⁷ Katrina Hedditch, *Lemnos 1915: A Nursing Odyssey to Gallipoli*, (Victoria: Press Here, 2011), 19.
- ⁸ The 2013 publication, *Australian Heroines of World War One: Gallipoli, Lemnos and the Western Front*, by Susanna de Vries adds to the discourse by tracing the course of the Great War through the first hand accounts of eight Australian women.
- ⁹ Janet Butler, "Nursing Gallipoli: Identity and the Challenge of Experience", *Grit: Journal of Australian Studies*, 78 (2003): 47–56.
- ¹⁰ Medical services units, general and stationary hospitals, and ambulance and medical officers, were all required to complete such diaries.
- ¹¹ The appendices, which make up the larger part of each diary, may include orders, despatches, instructions, reports, telegrams, and decisions taken; daily situation reports; staff duties; accounts of operations; changes in establishment or strength; and a summary of information received. Archival series AWM4 Class 26 comprises the diaries from Medical, Dental and Nursing Units of the First World War.
- ¹² Peter Stanley, *Simpson's Donkey: A wartime journey to Gallipoli and beyond*, (Sydney: Pier 9: 2011). *Lost Boys of Anzac*, (Coogee, New South Wales: New South Publishing, 2014).
- ¹³ Robin Gerster, *Big-noting: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press), 1987.

- ¹⁴ For a discussion about the historiography of modern Greece see, Alexander Kitroeff, "Continuity and Change in Contemporary Greek Historiography", *European Historical Quarterly*, 19 (1989): 269–298.
- ¹⁵ A Liakos, "Modern Greek Historiography (1974–2000)", U. Brunbauer (ed.), in *(Re) Writing History. Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism*, Munster, LIT Verlag, (2004): 351–378.
- ¹⁶ Interview with Dr Helen Gardikas, 'Anzac Cove' atsiadakis, Athens, 12 May 2011.
- ¹⁷ Author interview with Theodoros Belitsos, Athens, 12 May 2011.
- ¹⁸ Note that the specific detail of that role is not the intent of this chapter.
- ¹⁹ Hugh Gilchrist, *Australians and Greeks Vol 1*, (Sydney, Halstead Press, 1992), 78, 233, 378. Eleftherios Kanellos and Nicholas Bachali are two documented early arrivals to Australia from Lemnos.
- ²⁰ As well as offering Lemnos to the British as a base for their fleet, Venizelos also promised troops (three divisions) for Gallipoli: probably in the hope of Greece capturing Constantinople. This military assistance was, however, never forthcoming as Venizelos resigned on 6 March 1915, due to objections from the Greek king to the prime minister's policy.
- ²¹ Charles E W Bean, op. cit.
- ²² "First World War 1914–1918", <http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/ww1.asp>, accessed 2 October, 2012.
- ²³ Hugh Gilchrist, *Australians and Greeks Vol 2*, (Sydney: Halstead Press, 1996), 37.
- ²⁴ "Frederick E Forrest (W2729 Lieutenant Colonel), 1st AIF, War Diary – 19 October 1914 to 8 September 1917", <http://www.amosa.org.au/schools/mhp/diaries/War%20diary%20-Frederick%20Forrest.pdf>, accessed 25 August, 2012.
- ²⁵ "Frederick E Forrest (W2729 Lieutenant Colonel), 1st AIF, War Diary – 19 October 1914 to 8 September 1917", *ibid*.
- ²⁶ "Gallipoli and the Anzacs, Nurses' Stories: Lance Corporal Archibald Barwick", <http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/nurses/barwick-diary.html>, accessed 25 January, 2010.
- ²⁷ "Diary of an ANZAC – HV Reynolds", <http://www.awm.gov.au/blog/2010/04/08/thursday-8th-april-1915-diary-of-hv-reynolds/>, accessed 2 October, 2012.
- ²⁸ Charles E W Bean, op. cit., 210.
- ²⁹ Frederick E Forrest, op. cit.
- ³⁰ Hugh Gilchrist, op. cit.
- ³¹ "Lemnos Island", <http://throughtheselines.com.au/research/mudros-west>, accessed 7 December 2011.
- ³² "Lemnos Island", *ibid*.
- ³³ "Nursing at Lemnos, August–December 1915", <http://throughtheselines.com.au/research/mudros-west> accessed 7 December, 2011.
- ³⁴ "Gallipoli and the Anzacs, Nurses' Stories", <http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/nurses.html>, accessed 22 March, 2010.
- ³⁵ "Gallipoli and the Anzacs, Nurses' Stories".
- ³⁶ "Hot baths at Thermos", <http://throughtheselines.com.au/research/therma>, accessed 7 November, 2012.
- ³⁷ Hugh Gilchrist, op. cit., 41.
- ³⁸ "The excursion most in favour with Australians", <http://throughtheselines.com.au/research/therma>, accessed 7 November, 2012.
- ³⁹ "Hot baths at Thermos".

- ⁴⁰ A G Butler, "Official History of the Australian Army", www.awm.gov.au/histories/first_world_war/volume.asp?levelID=67898, Chapter 17, accessed 18 August, 2011.
- ⁴¹ *ibid.*
- ⁴² *The Register*, Adelaide, 18 November 1916, 4.
- ⁴³ "Lemnos Island", <http://throughtheselines.com.au/research/mudros-west>, accessed 7 December, 2011.
- ⁴⁴ "Lemnos Island", <http://throughtheselines.com.au/research/lemnos-island>, accessed 27 August, 2012.
- ⁴⁵ Ann Elias, "War, flowers and visual culture: the First World War collection of the Australian War Memorial", *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No 40, 1–13.
- ⁴⁶ "Lemnos Mental Home Official Opening: Nothing Like a Prison", *The West Australian*, 13 July 1926, 8.
- ⁴⁷ Attendance at the Anzac Day services at Gallipoli has grown steeply—from 4,500 visitors in 1994 to nearly 18,000 in 2004. Approximately 10,000 visitors continue to attend Anzac ceremonies at Gallipoli. A new invasion of sorts has been underway for the last two decades.
- ⁴⁸ The Anzac Walk takes the visitor around 14 locations on the old Anzac battlefield of 1915 at Gallipoli.
- ⁴⁹ The bronze plaque was made in Melbourne by Dr Ross Bastiaan, who also composed the memorial's text. Email correspondence from Spiros Hrambanis, 26 April 2013.
- ⁵⁰ Interviews with Dimitri Boulotis and Chrisostomos Maitharis (Mudros). 15 May, 2011.
- ⁵¹ Harvey Broadbent, "Loving Gallipoli to distraction or destruction?" <http://theconversation.edu.au/loving-gallipoli-to-distraction-or-destruction-813>, accessed 29 August, 2011.
- ⁵² There is now detailed coverage of the Dardanelles battles in the national Turkish school curricula and a stipulation that every Turkish school student will make an organised excursion to the Gallipoli battlefield at least once. This helps to explain the hundreds of packed Turkish tour buses that arrive at the peninsula to lumber along the narrow sloping and winding roads to the various cemeteries.
- ⁵³ Harvey Broadbent, "Loving Gallipoli to distraction or destruction?"
- ⁵⁴ *ibid.*
- ⁵⁵ Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives, "Various documents about Australia and England", Politics, 1916, A/5, Athens.
- ⁵⁶ Commonwealth War Graves Commission, <http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/69001/EAST%20MUDROS%20MILITARY%20CEMETERY>, accessed 2 October, 2012. These Russians had fled their homeland, being evacuated from Novorossisk in 1921, after the Bolshevik Civil War victory.
- ⁵⁷ Commonwealth War Graves Commission, <http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/69002/PORTIANOS%20MILITARY%20CEMETERY>, accessed 2 October, 2012.

